# CLAIMS

We claim:

1.    A client-side system for e-commerce, which integrates point-of-sale and Internet operations, comprising:

a merchant's computer having a processor, a memory coupled to the processor, and a computer readable medium coupled to the memory having computer readable program code means embodied therein;

computer readable program code means for generating an e-commerce website on the merchant's computer and uploading said website to a Web server;

computer readable program code means for maintaining a client-side database of the inventory of items offered for sale on the website and at a point-of-sale;

computer readable code means for updating said inventory database to reflect sales made on the website and at the point-of-sale; and

computer readable code means for reflecting changes on the website resulting from changes in the inventory of the items avalable for sale.


2.    A system according to Claim 1, wherein the means for generating a website comprises static ASCII text files created in HTML format on the merchant's computer and then uploaded from the merchant's computer to a Web server via the Internet standard File Transfer Protocol (FTP), said static ASCII text HTML files transferred from the Web server via the Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP) to a Internet customer's computer having a Web browser, and said merchant's e-commerce website dynamically generated by the Web browser from the merchant's uploaded ASCII text HTML files.

3.     A system according to Claim 2, further including the Internet customer's Web browser, said system being configured such that said means for updating the inventory is initiated by a customer transaction relating to an item or items available for sale on the merchant's e-commerce website, thus resulting in a non-secure e-commerce Order, said Internet customer's Web browser transferring information about said non-secure e-commerce order to a third party's Web server via HTTP (Hypertext Transfer Protocol), which then transfers the transaction via the Internet to an electronic mail server identified by the merchant using SMTP (Simple Mail Transfer Protocol).

4.     A system according to Claim 3, wherein said system is configured such that said means to reflect changes on the website involves uploading updated pages for the website generated by the updated inventory database.

5.     A system according to Claim 3, wherein said system is configured such that said Internet customer's Web browser transfers information about said e-commerce order as a Non-Secure Order to a third party's web server via HTTP, which then transfers the non-secure order via the Internet to an electronic mail server using SMTP.

6.    A system according to Claim 3, wherein said system is configured such that said Internet customer's Web browser transfers information about said e-commerce order as a Secure Order via the Internet using the Secure Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTPS) to transfer said information to a Third Party Secure Transaction Payment Provider, who then transmits the secure order to the merchant's electronic mail server using SMTP.

7. A system according to claim 3, further comprising:

means for tracking  company expenses, vendors, customers or employees;

means for generating various reports including, but not limited to, inventory detail, sales, returns, profit;

means for reordering items when quantities reach predetermined levels;

means for automatically calculating taxes and shipping charges; and

means for processing e-commerce and point-of-sale transactions, including cash sales, returns, invoices, credit memos, and payments.

8.    A system according to Claim 1 wherein said system is configured such that the merchant uses the system with multiple e-commerce websites or multiple points-of-sale that offer for sale items from a common inventory.

9.    A system according to Claim 1 wherein said system is configured such that the merchant uses the system in connection with an Intranet.

10. A system according to Claim 1 wherein the system further includes search engine means for enabling a customer to search the merchant's website.

11. A system according to Claim 10 wherein said system is configured such that the search engine means provides for the indexing and searching of merchant web sites.

12. A system to integrate point-of-sale and e-commerce website operations on a merchant's computer, having means to execute computer readable program codes and to communicate with a Web server, said system comprising:

a computer readable program code to construct and maintain an inventory database;

a computer readable program code to generate an e-commerce website;

a computer readable program code for updating inventory information in said database and on the website;

a computer readable program code for processing point-of-sale transactions;

a computer readable program code for processing e-commerce transactions, resulting in the data being in the same computer readable format as the point-of-sale transactions, and

a computer readable program code for transferring data about transactions and inventory information between said merchant's computer and the Web server to synchronize the inventory database and to update the website to reflect changes resulting from the processed transactions.

13.    A system according to claim 12, wherein the transferred transactional data and inventory information are text files created statically on the merchant's computer.

14.    A system according to claim 13, wherein said system is configured such that said integration further comprises transfer of data about transactions and inventory information between the merchant's Web server for electronic mail to the merchant's computer via the public Internet.

15. A system according to claim 14, wherein said system is further configured such that said integration further comprises data about transactions and inventory information being transferred from a general Internet user's computer to the merchant's secure transaction provider's computer via the public Internet, and then transferring said data and information between the merchant's secure transaction provider's computer to the merchant's electronic mail server via the public Internet.

16. A system according to claim 15, further comprising:

a computer readable program code for tracking company expenses, vendors, customers and employees;

a computer readable program code for generating various reports including, but not limited to, inventory detail, sales, returns, profit;

a computer readable program code for reordering items when quantities reach predetermined levels;

a computer readable program code for automatically calculating taxes and shipping charges; and

wherein said computer readable program code for processing e-commerce and point-of-sale transactions, includes code to process cash sales, returns, invoices, credit memos, and other payments.


17. A system according to claim 16, further comprising:.
a computer readable code for enabling a customer to search merchant web sites.

18. A client-side program executable by a merchant's computer performing method steps for enabling an inventory management system to integrate point-of-sale and e-commerce operations on the merchant's website, comprising:

transferring information between the merchant's computer and a Web server linked to the merchant's website;

querying said website for inventory information;

retrieving inventory information corresponding to said query; and

integrating said inventory information from the website with inventory information maintained about the merchant's point-of-sale operations.

19. A program according to claim 18, further comprising:

processing point-of-sale transactions;

processing e-commerce transactions, with the data in the same computer readable format as the point-of-sale transactions; and

synchronizing the inventory information on the website with the point-of-sale operations.

20. A program according to Claim 19, further comprising:

tracking company expenses;

generating various reports including, but not limited to, inventory detail, sales, returns, profit; and

reordering items when quantities reach predetermined levels.